

Of Hard Facts

Allen V. Dulles, founder and director of the Central Intelligence Agency, has retired and his place will be filled by John A. McCone, former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission.

Americans view Dulles' departure with mixed emotions for his was not a tasteful job—running a cloak and dagger outfit, spying and setting brother against brother. The CIA Cuban fiasco did not help his popular image. But American prejudice against all that kind of business is in error in personifying the feeling. Its issue is against a sorry world where even the just and the kindly must wear knucks to prevent being waylaid by assassins. The coming or going of a Dulles or a McCone is only slightly relevant, as witnessed by the fact that the department cannot be closed down, but must go on with even more effect. The country owes Mr. Dulles a note of gratitude because he had both an understanding of and a genius for the work and was sufficiently

devoted to his country to accept the sacrifices and disabilities of the job.

The true value of Mr. Dulles will not be known because the nature of his acts was secret and will not be pleaded before an open jury of his American peers. But it must be assumed that most of his achievements were of a good order, if for no other reason than that his visible errors were so few.

The CIA represents one of the hard facts of life as does a huge national budget, more than half of which must directly go to survival and a good deal of the rest of it to the companion task of inventing further ways of accelerating our national activity in order to cope with the new challenges that keep piling up. That doesn't leave much left for the vision of a social and economic millenium. That may not be a pretty picture, but it is a factual one. And it is important that the vision be kept and it will be a victorious people who will consent, as Mr. Dulles consented, to tasks of hard sacrifice.